



Private Myths: Dreams and Dreaming

Anthony Stevens

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Every night we enter a mythic realm, a dark, primordial world of fear and desire. What this world offers, Anthony Stevens suggests, may well be the key to understanding our waking mysteries--ourselves, our society, and our history. A prominent psychiatrist and practicing Jungian analyst, Stevens views dreaming from both psychological and neurological perspectives to show how dreams owe their origins as much to our evolutionary history as a species as to our personal history as individuals.

A work rich in symbolic and scientific insight, *Private Myths* traverses the course of dream interpretation from distant hunter-gatherer times to the present. This analysis is as authoritative as it is wide-ranging, including discussions of the biology of dreaming and the discovery of REM sleep, elaboration of the latest neuroscientific techniques in sleep research, and an assessment of the century-long legacy of analytic practice to dream interpretation. In a close look at the actual processes of dream formation, Stevens relates "dream work" to other creative capacities such as language, poetry, storytelling, memory, play, symptom-formation, magic, and ritual. He draws on his many years of experience to analyze key historical dreams, such as Freud's dream of Irma's injection and Hitler's dream of being buried alive, and enriches this discussion with analyses of his own and his patients' dreams.

Remarkable in its breadth, *Private Myths* makes the principles of dream interpretation accessible to scientists, the findings of dream science accessible to analysts, and the discoveries of both available to anyone intrigued by the mysteries of dreams and dreaming.

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